A

LETTER

TO A

FRIEND,

About the late

PROCLAMATION

On the 11th. of *December*, 1679.

For further

PROROGUING

THE

PARLIAMENT

Till the 11th. of *November* next ensuing.

Imprimis interest Reipublicæ, ut pax in Regno conservetur, & quæcunque paci adversentur, providè declinentur. Nihil Infra Regnum subditos magis conservat in tranquillitate & concordia, quam debita Legum administratio.
Coke Inst. 2d. Fol. 158.

London, Printed *Anno Dom.* 1679.

LETTER

A LETTER TO A FRIEND, &c.

SIR,

I Know you are a Lover of News, provided it be good, and such as may promote the honour of his most *sacred Majesty*, and the interest of our *Nation*, which consists in the constant preservation of the *true Protestant Religion*, * *Liberty*, and *Property*; which, I hope, will never be *invaded* by any *Foreign Power*, and which certainly I may very well presume to believe will never be in the least *incroached upon* at *home*, by any whomsoever, during the happy life of our *gratious Soveraign*, whom *God Almighty* in his infinite mercy long continue among us.

* *Magna Charta* the best Law, next to the Divine of any in the World.

But such is the *obstreperous noise* of malevolent tongues, that I find nothing will please, in this nice and scrupulous *Juncture* of affairs and circumstances, whatsoever may possibly be endeavoured, to give the most of content and satisfaction. All things that come on the sudden, strike the senses of the *unthinking populace* with such a gastly surprize, that strait it presents them with the *Idea* of *Raw-head* and

Bloody bones, without any further Reflections upon the matter, until ſome *wiſer heads* take it into their ſerious conſideration to undeceive them; and to ſhow them, that if ever they mean to learn to be *better Politicks*, and more *Loyal Subjects*, by weighing every Intelligence in the unerring Ballance of a ſolid and ſteady Judgement, this is the time.

Every *Coffee-houſe* now ſeems, as it were, a *Cabal of State*, and the conſidering poſitive Cuſtomer as great a *Privy Counſellour*, as (ſome would fain have us for certain to believe,) the *moſt Chriſtian King*, *Monſieur Colbert*, and the reſt of the *French Cabinet*, are here, at the *Royal-board*, in every thing that is tranſacted.

I am ſorry to ſay ſo much, but yet my integrity obliges me to ſpeak the truth, or not to ſpeak at all: — and how am I capable to be ſilent, that have on each ſide my Ears, almoſt whereſoever buſineſs, or what elſe calls me, the perpetual gratings of unpleaſant diſcourſes; eſpecially, about this laſt *Proclamation* of His *Majeſty* for the *Proroguing* of his *Parliament* from the 26*th*. of *January*, 167$\frac{9}{80}$. till the 11*th* of *November* following, 1680. when as yet, the people cry, he hath never ſeen half their Faces, and ſo conſequently cannot know the temper of their ſpirits, how far they will ſtand by him with their Lives and Fortunes upon all occaſions; or what they will unanimouſly do for him, to advance his glory and honour, by making him *formidable* to all his *Enemies*, and *envied* by his *Neighbours*; and by ſetling him, if that can poſſibly be, more deeply in the hearts and affections of all his Loving and Obedient Subjects.

I muſt confeſs, at the firſt daſh, what the People do generally ſay, ſeems to carry great ſtrength of Reaſon along with it; And, you know, the *multitude*, for want of better underſtanding, take up with *firſt Notions*, and run hand-ſmooth away with them; they think it a mighty piece of im-

impertinence and folly, to be serious in searching deep into the *streſs* of matters, when (alas!) they are ſo plain and obvious to every common Capacity, that certainly none but thoſe deſerve *Bedlam*, or a worſe place, who in the leaſt queſtion, or disbelieve them.

Are we not, ſay they, in a *wood* of Intanglements, and eminent dangers, begirt round with numbers that have their ſeveral *Intereſts* to bring us unto Ruine, and Miſery? Do not the *Papiſts* more than ever come thick upon us with their Helliſh and Damnable Plots, and Conſpiracies? Is it not their principle to depoſe and murther KINGS, to kill Subjects and People, and to make the *Streets*, as a *Red Sea*, with the *blood* of *Proteſtants*, whom they falſly call HERETICKS, and damn, if it be poſſible, their Souls too into the bargain? Have we not experienced this in Queen *Maries* days? And in our freſh remembrances, does not the ſight of our *new built houſes*, ſadly put us in mind, that *the glorious City was become a heap of Aſhes?* And how many Repetitions of *dreadful fires* have been both in *Suburbs*, and *Countries*, ſince that amazing *conflagration?* What tricks and deviſes have been uſed by them, (for the luſt as well as advantage of *Foreigners*) to *Prorogue*, and *diſſolve* our *Parliaments?* and is it not too true, that the Dutchy of *Mantoua*, *Legorn*, and ſeveral other places abroad, above a month before any ſuch thing was talkt on here, had advice from *Rome*, that our *preſent Parliament* (which, as it did highly concern us, we did with impatience hope, and almoſt verily believe, ſhould ſit at the ſtated time in *January* next, but now to our great aſtoniſhment, find our big expectations are dwindled into diſappointment) that our *preſent Parliament*, I ſay, ſhould very ſhortly for certain be *Prorogued* for near a twelve month; and have not we had Letters of it ſent over to us by our Factors there? And, is it not ſtrange that one of the *Lords* in the *Tower*, almoſt a week before any ſuch rumour or ſurmiſe was in Town, ſhould

confidently report the same *Prorogation*, & for the same length of time to be within a very few daies? And that it should so happen as they had prophecyed? Can we know, see, and hear of all these things, and yet believe we are safe and well, and our Circumstances as happy as ever? Surely we must not be blind in pure complaisance, because our Courteous enemies would have us so.

This, and a great deal more, Sir, is the common discourse of all *Coffee-houses*, if not of most *private Societies*: but to shew you what may be said by way of *healing* and reconcilement, be pleased to let me present you with these following Considerations.

1. And first of all, certainly none can have such a ridiculous and groundless fancy to believe, that the KING can be any ways inclinable * to *Popery*; when (not to mention the treatment and usage he met with in his unhappy exile at such a tender Age) he has so clearly opened his heart, and in the most ingaging words imaginable, declared to the contrary over and over again, to *both his Houses of Parliament*; and has he not given them the assurance of it upon his *Royal word*, (and what can be required more?) that **in all things which concerned their Religion, and the publick security, he should not follow their Zeal, but lead it?** And for the generality of us, *if we respect our obedience to God, what appearance is there, that after so durable and general an enlightning of our minds with the sacred truth, we should again put out our own eyes, to wander through the palpable darkness of the Romish gross superstition?* And hath not His Ma-

jesty

* *If there should be any such, I would caution them to remember one Act, and it is in* 13. *Ca.* 2. *C.* 1. *S.* 2. *Entituled,* An Act for the safety and preservation of his Majesties person and Government, against Treasonable and Seditious Practises and Attempts.

His Majesties most Gracious Speech to both Houses of Parliament, Wednesday 30*th.* of April, 1679.

jeſty ſeveral times told us, he verily believes there is a Plot and Conſpiracy by the *Papiſts* againſt his moſt *ſacred Perſon*, and ſhall we imagine, he can have any kindneſs for them, or their Idolatrous Religion, which bolſters them up in ſuch horrible wickedneſs, as to take away His life, deſtroy his Subjects, or at leaſt abſolve them from their Allegiance to him, and poſſeſs themſelves of his Kingdome, by making it a *Fendatory* to the *See* of *Rome*? This would be next to *Nonſenſical* ſurely, but to put it upon the *ſuppoſition*.

2. And then, what ground or Reaſon can any one have to think that he is fallen out with his Parliaments? Has **any King been ſo much beholding to them, as he has been**? He has himſelf told you **none**, nor doeshe **think the Crown can be happy without frequent Parliaments**: And hathhe not often ſo la repeated to the ſame effect, his affection to, and eſteem for them? and will nothing aſſure you that he is Real, becauſe he hath made ſo many *Prorogations*, and eſpecially now ſo long a One? He hath told you, he hath been forced (no doubt to his own inward regret,) to *diſſolve two Parliaments* within leſs then a years time, becauſe of the great heats and animoſities among them: And if this *preſent Parliament* has only met as yet to be *Prorogued*, you hear from him why it is, *viz.* **for many Weighty Reaſons**, which he would have all his dutiful Subjects to know, are the *Arcana Imperii*, not to be ſearched into, till he ſees the beſt time *gratiouſly* to reveal them. He hath heard how great the murmurs of his People have been, at the *heavy taxes* that the *Parliament* have ſo often laid upon them; and perhaps that may be one Reaſon, why he is unwilling to have them ſit any oftner than abſolute neceſſity may require, becauſe he will not put them into fears and inquietudes of new, and more greivous Impoſitions; but chooſes rather to ſubmit to the loſs of a great

His Speech to both Houſes of Parliament, 21th. March, 166¾. Pag. 6.

great part of his Revenue, (which he does certainly within a little time,) and to take up with ſuch *Retrenchments* in his own houſe, that are almoſt to the diſhonour of an *Engliſh Monarch*, than he will, as much as in him lies, give them any diſguſt. He hath promiſed, in the *Interval*, to make as ſtrict a ſearch as he can into the plot himſelf, and to do all things for his people to their own wiſh if they will but have patience, and give him time. You ſee, he hath iſſued forth ſeveral *Proclamations* for Removing of *Roman Catholicks* ten miles from the City of *London* and *Weſtminſter*; and hath ſtraitly charged the *Lord Mayor* and *Aldermen*, and his *Juſtices of the Peace*, to ſee them put in due Execution: He hath promiſed great rewards to any whoſoever, that ſhall apprehend *Prieſts*, or *Jeſuits*, or make but any diſcovery of their Lands or Eſtates; and given frequent aſſurances that he will be unwearied in his care and dilligence for our good, for the ſafety of our Lives, Religion, Liberty, Property, and all that is dear to us. Now what more can be ſaid by a *gracious King*, and what leſs can he expect from an *obedient people*, next to our truſt in *Almighty God*, than that we ſhould all unanimouſly repoſe our Confidence in him, and reſt ſatisfied under his Protection?

But, O cry the people very fiercely, here's a year's *Prorogation* longer, and we ſhall never ſee our dearly beloved *Parliament* again; The *French King*, he is ready to fall ſwoop upon us with a very great Army, and what Ships have we to oppoſe him? we hear too what is to be done in *Scotland*, ten thouſand of *Additional forces* to be raiſed to the *ſtanding Militia*; Beſides how inclinable is *Ireland* to rebel naturally, and eſpecially, when it is like to meet with ſo many great advantages on all hands; and what if *Holland* ſhould come and clap in 20000 more in ſome other parts of the Kings Dominions, are we not in a fine bepickled condition to receive them? and yet we muſt fear nothing: I confeſs, if

theſe

theſe things ſhould occur, it is the high road way to make us Slaves and Vaſſals; but if ever it tends to make — more great and glorious, more free, more unconfin'd, and abſolute, *Phillida ſolus habeto.*

I anſwer, 'tis true, we have ſome Grounds to be Jealous, leaſt a *French Armade* may too ſoon come over, and attaque us; but, admit the worſt, that it ſhould dare to invade us, they cannot any where Land ſo conſiderable a number both of Horſe and men, as there ought to be for ſuch a deſign, in ſo ſhort a time, as that the Country would not be Allarm'd at it, and be preſently up to quell ſo adventurous a Motion; as we may be ſure of, by what happened about a year ſince in the Iſle of *Purbeck* in *Dorſetſhire*: And when once we ſhould find it was a thing in earneſt, all *England* would join in the concert, and be as one man againſt ſo dangerous and potent an Enemy, as is He of *France*. It has been ſaid, that **England is a dull Brute*: I know not how juſtly it might deſerve the ill-favoured Epithite, ſuppoſing the *Brute* might be allowed, but only in this reſpect, that it does not fully know the greatneſs of its own ſtrength; but this I think I may very confidently ſay, and ſtand to't, that whenſoever any ſhould put us upon the *bloudy experiment*, and provoke us to extremities; they would find that *Engliſh* hearts and courages, eſpecially on the defenſive part, and that too of a juſt and *righteous cauſe*, are not of *common* mould: No, when we ſee our *all* lies at ſtake; our Souls, our Bodies, our Eſtates, our Wives, our Children, our Reformed Religion, and all that makes for the peace and happineſs of our KING, and Country; we ſhall no longer dally, but *quit our ſelves like men*, and like *Chriſtians*; and ſince in ſuch a caſe, it may be ſaid, *we are fighting the Lord's battles*, how may we expect to have the *Almighty Arm* aſſiſting, and going before us, *conquering, and to conquer*, and of whom then ſhould we be afraid?

* *Letter from* Amſterdam *to a friend in* London.

And as to the *Proclamation* for *proroguing the Parliament*,

what falſe concluſions doe they draw from it? We ſay, *à potentia Hominis ad actum non valet conſequentia*; But they will have it, right or wrong, that the *Parliament* is *prorogued* till the 11*th*. of *November*, becauſe the *Proclamation*, and the KING by that, ſays, that **having many weighty Reaſons** (not yet convenient for us to know, or elſe, to be ſure, he would acquaint us with them;) he is reſolved, the *Parliament* ſhall on the 26*th*. of *January*, be *prorogued* till the 11*th*. of *November* next. Now, I pray, let me make ſome few ſhort remarks hereupon, as they are plainly obvious to every underſtanding Perſon, and I will then ſubmit my ſelf to your Judgements for the reaſonableſs of what I ſay.

I. Can you find any thing that proves the *Parliament* is by this *Proclamation* de facto *prorogued* till *November* next? If no, as I am ſure, you cannot; why are you then ſo clamorous and poſitive, as to affirm it is?

II. The Proclamation is but declarative of what the KING intends to do on the 26*th*. of *January*, becauſe of **the many weighty Reaſons** that move him to do ſo; but do you think, if, before the time of their *meeting* next month, the KING ſhould have **more weighty Reaſons**, both for number and quality, to induce him to the contrary, and to oblige him to change his Reſolution, that he would not, becauſe the *Royal-word* was gone forth? our Laws are not like to thoſe of the *Medes* and *Perſians*, which alter not; and ſurely much leſs may we imagine that *Proclamations* are irrevocable.

III. To be ſure the KING will be very well adviſed indeed, before he actually *prorogues* his *Parliament* for ſo long a time as a twelve moneth; becauſe he knows then, that how urging ſoever the occaſion may be, to require him to have his *Parliament* ſit ſooner, yet they cannot in the *Interval* of prorogation ſit legally to do any thing but in a preparatory way, *in ordine ad, &c.* to have things ſo much the more ready againſt the opening of the *Parliament*; and therefore they muſt be extraordinary *weighty Reaſons*, that

ſhall

ſhall oblige him to run the hazard of ſo great an Inconvenience, which is no other way remediable, but by a preſent diſſolution of this, and calling of a *new Parliament*, and that too will take up a good deal of time, in iſſuing forth the *Writs*, and waiting for the proper Court days to elect Members.

IIII. Though the KING at the time of his iſſuing out this Proclamation, ſaw nothing that could out-weigh thoſe *Reaſons*, betwixt than, and the 26*th*. of *January*, and therefore not to put his *Parliament-men* to unneceſſary charges, by their long and wearieſome Journies up to Town, with their Numerous Servants to wait on them, ſays in great affection, as well as condeſcention, **That we will not at the ſaid ſix and twentieth day of** January **expect the attendance of any but only ſuch as being near about the City of London and Weſtminſter may attend the making the ſaid Prorogation**; Yet if every *Member* of *Parliament*, the Lords Spiritual and temporal, and every of the Knights, Citizens, and Burgeſſes of the Houſe of Commons (who repreſent in Parliament all the Communalty of *England*) ſhould be at the expence and trouble of coming up to Town, to appear in their reſpective houſes, and ſhould than and there * unanimouſly reſolve immediately to ſend unto his *Majeſty* (according to the 13. *Car.* 2. *c.* 5. before ever they ſhould be called up to the Lord's houſe,) tenn of the Noble Lords from that houſe, in their own Names, and in the names of all the other their Fellow-Peers; and the Houſe of Commons likewiſe to ſend tenn of the chief of their Members to his *Majeſty* in their own Names, and in the names of all the Commons of *England*, and they ſeverally to caſt themſelves at his Majeſties feet, and with the utmoſt humility, and ſence of duty and loyalty, plainly and briefly to lay open before him, the great danger his *Royal* perſon is in, from the preſent Plots,

The ſaid Proclamation.

Co. 2. Inſt. 157.

**Veritis inſeparabiles, ſi fuerit is inſeparabiles.*

influences, villanous designs, and bloudy conspiracies of the *Papists*, as also that of the Protestant Religion, and the ancient well established Government of this his Kingdome, and all his *Majesties* Protestant Subjects; and likewise humbly to beg (as ever he regards the preservation of those,) since they were now so happily met together, to consult *de arduis & urgentibus negotiis Regni*, that his *Majesty* would be gratiously pleased to let the *Parliament* continue to sit, that so he might thereby come to the knowledge of the steadiness of their loyalty, and affection for his service, till they had effected these great things, which would make him the most fear'd of Princes in this life, and his Name hereafter glorious in Chronicle, and which would most undoubtedly be to the Infinite Joy and satisfaction of all his loving and dutiful Subjects; if, I say, they should all thus meet and do; can any one imagine that he would resolutely withstand such an earnest prayer, and so universally put up to him by his whole Realm? let none offer to believe it; for nothing can truely be the Subjects interest and felicity, that is Independant on the *King*'s: and where all join in hands and hearts, for the real good, peace, and prosperity of his *sacred person*, and his Kingdom, sure he cannot but gladly hear, he will not but affectionately grant.

Jacob strove and wrestled in prayer, and did prevail accordingly 32 *Gen.* And although *God* had resolved *Hezekiah*'s death, and to that end sent his Prophet *Isaiah* to tell him of it, as for certain, from him, with a *thus saith the Lord, set thine House in order, for thou shalt dye, and not live*; (and here's a reduplication of the same thing, to denote, as it were, the Impossibility of the reversal;) yet when *Hezekiah pray'd unto the Lord, and beseeched him to remember*, how he had walk'd, and what he had done, and *wept sore* before him in prayer, by way of an ardent importunity that his life might be prolonged; *God* was wrought upon by his unfeigned request, and he sent his Prophet again to him, *saying*,

saying, the Lord, the God of David thy Father, hath heard thy prayer, he hath seen thy tears, and he will add unto thy days fifteen years: Nay, he granted him more than his Petition, for he likewise promised *to deliver both him, and his City out of the hands of the King of Assyria*, and that *he would be the defence of that City*; and, to put it out of all manner of question, that he should not be so good as his word, he assured it by a sign, of *bringing the shadow of the degrees which was gone down in the Sunn-dyall of Ahaz, tenn degrees back-ward*. All which you may read in 38 *Is.* from the first to the 9*th.* verse.

But this is not by any way of Application, because *Almighty God* did hearken to *Hezekiah*'s prayer, and was intreated of him to add a further continuance to his life, notwithstanding his seeming fixed resolution then to put a period to his days here on earth, that therefore the people might come *tumultuously* and *seditiously* to offer up their *Petitions* to his *sacred Majesty* upon all occasions, when any particular discontented freagues should possess their heads; far be it from me to have the least of such a thought, for I would perish rather than maintain it: but yet methinks (since it is possible that KINGS may be mislead by the false suggestions and informations of evil Consellors, to act, in some things, contrary to their own Royal interest, and the peace and prosperity of their truely Loyal Subjects,) provided they do not sin against any of the *Common*, or *Statute Laws* of this Realm, by joining in *Petitions*, for the Alteration of the Laws, *&c.* they need not be denied the making of their Addresses to him, in an humble and befitting manner, for these two Reasons.

1. Because nothing can be more significative of the people's great and undoubted dependence on him for the redressing of all their grievances, than such a low and becoming prostration: 'Tis the highest duty and reverence that can be paid him, and that which,

2. Does most assimilate him to God himself; who, as he is the most absolute, supream *being* both of Heaven and Earth in his infinite wisdome, hath found out no other way for us, by which to perform our utmost submission and allegiance to Him than by this of prayer and fervent supplication: we can but fall down upon our Knees, when we would pay our highest adorations to the *King of Kings*; and He, in that tender *mercy*, which is over all his works, hath made that to be, our greatest duty, and sence of devotion, which is our most exalted felicity: what then can be more advancing of glory to an earthly KING, and what can be more expressive of deep humility in a subjected people, than such dutiful incurvations, in an observance of those *Laws*, of which he hath graciously been pleased to oblige himself to be *the defendour*, as well as *of the Faith*.

And, therefore to conclude, if there be any like to *Thomas Woolsey*, (whom in 7. H. 8. was made Cardinal, and grew into the heigth of his Authority and favour with the *King*, and hates both Parliaments, and Common Laws, (the principal means to keep Greatness in order and due subjection,) as he did, as it is contained in his Indictment, which he confessed of record, that he intended (to use the very words of the Record,) *antiquissimas Angliæ leges penitus subvertere, & enervare, universumque hoc Regnum Angliæ, & ejusdem Regni populum legibus Imperialibus, vulgò dictis legibus civilibus, & earundem Legum Canonibus imperpetuum subjugare, & subducere*, &c. and for the execution of his intended Plot, he was the means, that but one *Parliament* was holden in 14. years, *viz.* from the 7. year to the 21. of *H.* 8. I say, if any, in this particular, be like to the Cardinal, I pray God, in great mercy to this Nation, grant, that such wicked and damnable designs may some way or other be disclosed to his *Sacred Majesty*, that they may speedily receive the due deserts of such

Co. 2. Inst. fol. 626.

a treachery: For the ends of *Parliaments* are, 1. *Regni Melioratio*, the common good of the Kingdom, the *Parliament* being, as my Lord *Coke* says, the *Commune Concilium*: and 2. *Exhibitio justitiæ plenior*, for nothing is more glorious and necessary than the full execution of Justice: and as for the *Common-Laws* of *England*, the Nobility have ever had them in great estimation, and reverence, as their best birth right, and so have the *Kings* of *England*, as their principal Royalty, and right belonging to their Crown and Dignity: This made *H.* 1. that noble *King*, Sirnamed *Beauclark* to write to Pope *Pascha*l thus, *Notum habeat Sanctitas vestra, quod me vivente (auxiliante Deo) dignitates & usus Regni nostri Angliæ non imminuentur, & si Ego (quod absit) in tantâ me dejectione ponerem, Optimates mei, & totus Angliæ populus, id nullo modo pateretur*: Both which those Miscreants would utterly destroy, by causing a perpetual *absence* of *Parliaments*, and by making the *Common Laws* of *England* to truckle to the *Canons* of the *Civil Laws* of *Rome*.

Co. Inst. 2. 280.

id. fol. 97.

Chart. H. 1.

FINIS.